

Message Text

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10

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-11 ACDA-05 OMB-01 SAM-01 /086 W

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R 160852Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE 0261

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 5980

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, CB

SUBJ: INCIDENT AT SIEM REAP: SOVIET LINE

1. A RECENTLY ARRIVED MEMBER OF THE SOVIET EMBASSY STAFF, OLEG NOVIKOV, WHO DESCRIBES HIMSELF AS "ANALYST FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA", APPROACHED UPI'S ALAN DAWSON MARCH 1 AT A SOCIAL OCCASION AND DISCUSSED THE ALLEGED BOMBING AT SIEM REAP. FROM THE CONVERSATION, DAWSON RECEIVED THE IMPRESSION THAT THE SOVIETS WERE AS MUCH IN THE DARK ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED AS ALL OF US.

2. APPARENTLY BECAUSE OF THE STORY CIRCULATING THAT A MIG AIRCRAFT HAD BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FEBRUARY 25 BOMBING, THE SOVIET OFFICIAL TOOK GREAT PAINS TO EXPLAIN HOW HE HAD EXAMINED THE MIG THEORY AND DISCARDED IT. FIRST HE SAID, ONLY A MIG-23 WOULD HAVE HAD THE RANGE TO GO ALL THE WAY TO SIEM REAP FROM VIET-NWM OR CHINA, AND THERE
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ARE NO MIG-23S IN EAST ASIA. SECOND, A MIG-23 COULD NOT

TRANSPORT A BOMB AS LARGE AS ONE THOUSAND POUNDS WHICH, ASSUMING THE PLANE WAS FLYING LOW, WOULD HAVE BEEN REQUIRED TO MAKE CRATERS OF THE SIZE AND DEPTH REPORTED. FINALLY, THE SOVIET OFFICIAL SAID THAT IN ORDER TO AVOID DETECTION BY AMERICAN RADAR AT RAMASUN (SIC) THE PLANE WOULD HAVE HAD TO FLY VERY LOW. THE SOVIET CLAIMED THAT NEITHER CHINESE NOR NORTH VIETNAMESE PILOTS ARE PROFICIENT ENOUGH TO EXECUTE SUCH A MANEUVER. ONLY SOVIET PILOTS COULD FLY IN SUCH A FASHION, AND SINCE THERE WAS NO SOVIET INVOLVEMENT, THE MIG THEORY WAS WITHOUT SUBSTANCE, HE CONCLUDED.

3. COMMENT: APPARENTLY, THE SOVIET OFFICIAL MADE NO MENTION OF THE POSSIBILITY THAT A MIG AIRCRAFT BASED IN NEARBY SOUTHERN LAOS COULD HAVE MADE SUCH BOMBING RUNS. WHITEHOUSE

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
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